

Poor budgetary funds for climate criticised

BSS, Dhaka

Leaders of several civil society bodies hailed the budget for making the highest allocations to education and chalked out a long-term plan to mitigate the power shortage.

Equity and Justice Working Group (Eqijbd), an umbrella organisation of about a dozen NGOs, has however sounded critical to poor allocation to climate fund in the budget.

The NGO leaders hoped that the government would increase subsidy to farmers instead of reducing it this year from the level of last year. It has important bearing on attaining food security, they said. They also sounded highly critical about the way the budget is prepared and approved without much bothering to realities in different regions.

They emphasised the need for more involvement of the lawmakers in making budget to reflect the expectations of their electorate instead of giving blind support to the government budget.

They said the allocation remained unchanged this year at Tk 700 crore belying expectations that more allocation to this fund

would bring recognition to growing risks that the country is facing from climate change challenges.

They emphasised the quick enhancement of the utilisation capacity of the climate fund saying from last year's allocation the government had used only Tk 235 crore through official channels keeping NGOs out of using this fund at a time when cyclone Aila and Sidr affected people are still on waiting for rehabilitation.

Allocation is not enough, access to it by NGOs is also important to bring its benefits to the people. They said the budget should have separate allocations for coastal zones similar to district based budget system that the government is thinking to introduce starting from next year.

The budget lacked clear directions, they said about how to establish linkages between development planning by different ministries and their agencies with climate change issues and adaptation methods.

Moreover all funds relating to climate change issues need to be taken under a single authority with full national ownership and having participation of stakeholders in using the fund, they said.

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Budget traditional

Say left parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Biplobi Workers Party (BWP) and Ganatantrik Baam Morcha yesterday criticised the proposed budget terming it 'nothing new' while Bikalpadhara Bangladesh welcomed it saying that the proposed budget is a positive one.

"The proposed budget is inconsistent with philosophy of our economy; as it did not say much about strengthening socialism based economy and other state owned sectors," CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan said in a statement.

The budget was prepared in line with the trend of loot in the name of open market economy," he said.

BWP President Khandakar Ali Abbas and General Secretary Saiful Haq in a statement said the proposed budget has followed the past trend of purchasing ghee with loans.'

They said this budget will make rich man richer and increase discrimination in the society.

Ganatantrik Baam Morcha President Abdus Salam in his reaction said the proposed budget has offered nothing new.

He said there was no guideline in it to mitigate sufferings of the people.

Bikalpadhara Bangladesh Secretary General Maj (Retd) Abdul Mannan said this budget is positive for our economy though others may term it a highly ambitious one.

The finance minister has acted bravely in refixing Value Added Tax (VAT) on different items and deleting the PSI system, he said.



Child workers form a human chain in the city yesterday to mark the World Day Against Child Labour. (Story on Page 2)

PHOTO: STAR



Football fans vandalise a police bus at Dayaganj in the city last night after power outage in the area prevented them from watching Argentina-Nigeria match on television screen. They damaged several other vehicles and blocked the road for over two hours, causing severe traffic congestion.

Hatirjheel project likely to be completed by Dec next year

BSS, Dhaka

To protect the city from floods and storm waters, development work is going on in full swing for the integrated development of the Hatirjheel area that includes the Begunbari canal.

Sources said the project is likely to be completed by December next year.

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) has taken up the work for overall development in and around the area, considering its strategic importance in waste water management of the city, a long-standing problem in the metropolis.

"On completion of the project, it will be opened to traffic through its 9.8 kilometer road, which will have a width of 78 feet and connect the city's Rampura with the Tongi Diversion Road, both in the west and east side of the project that includes one expressway, a serviceable road and a walkway", Project Director Engineer Rashedul Ferdous told BSS.

The main objective of the project is to develop the low-lying areas located between Hatirjheel and Begunbari canal

through re-excavation of the only canal that has managed to survive, while many other canals have already disappeared.

The project covers 300 acres of low-lying land, in and around the Airport Road, near Sonargaon Hotel to Rampura Bridge, and is being developed at a cost of Tk 1,480 crore, jointly by Rajuk, Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) and the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED). The Special Works' Organisation (SWO) of the Bangladesh Army is carrying out the construction work.

As compensation for land acquisition in the project site, Rajuk has paid Tk 488 crore to the private land owners for 132 acres of land and another Tk 262 crore has been deposited to the government's exchequer for 81 acres that belong to the Court of Wards or khas (government-owned) land.

However, the total value of the government land, there is 344 crore and the balance will be paid after Rajuk gets the fourth installment of its allocated money from the Annual Development Programme (ADP) in the current budget.

Earlier, Rajuk had paid Tk 32 crore to the

private land owners for acquisition of 80 acres of land in the project area.

Since the beginning of the construction work, Rajuk had demolished 30 unauthorised installations, out of 40, and the rest remained intact due to court injunctions, as the land owners had filed writ petitions with the High Court.

Under the project design, construction of 2.25 kilometers, out of 8.80 kilometers road, has been completed along with the main diversion sewage line, while the rest of the work will be completed in the next dry season. So far, earth work and sand mixed brick filling of 9.8 kilometers of the road has been completed and work on only 320-meter remain incomplete, as Rajuk is yet to acquire the land.

In the project site, there are five unauthorised mosques and a Khana sharif. Efforts are underway to relocate them.

As of now, the land owners in the project site have filed 80 writ petitions with the High Court against land acquisition. They also want their houses back and changes in the plan of Hatirjheel project.

In his complaint, Ishaq alleged that Manjur concealed in his affidavit a fact that he was fined earlier for pilfering gas and electricity.

Ishaq said Manjur paid Tk 32,30,432 in fines to Bakharabad Gas Systems Limited on January 30 in 1999 on charges of pilfering of gas by his company Golden Iron Works Limited.

Manjur also paid Tk 17,23,565 in fines to Power Development

POWER OUTAGE

Soccer fans go on rampage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

8:30pm.

Jatrabari police told journalists that power went out at around 8:00pm in different areas including Golapbagh, Swamibagh and Gopibagh.

Bangshali police said several people were injured as residents of the area blocked the roads in Nayabazar and Bangshali areas and hurled brickbats at vehicles.

The situation came under control when power supply resumed in the areas.

Khaleda violates rules: Mohiuddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

With only four days left until Chittagong City Corporation elections, Nagorik Committee will focus more on door-to-door campaign in support of its mayoral candidate ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury to reach more voters in the last three days of electioneering from today.

Committee leaders decided on its new electioneering strategy, as many areas are still left out of the campaign, sources said.

The campaign will start from the Shaheed Minar in the morning, Mohiuddin said in a press conference yesterday.

All the leaders and supporters would gather at the Shaheed Minar before starting campaigning in groups in different city areas, he said.

Mohiuddin's chief election agent Ishaq Mia said the decision was taken to conduct the campaign in a coordinated way.

He said they would now emphasise on door-to-door campaign instead of street rally or view exchange meetings.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST KHALEDA

Meanwhile, Mohiuddin yesterday demanded that the Election Commission take action against opposition leader and BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia, saying that she has violated the electoral code of conduct by giving guidelines to senior BNP leaders regarding electioneering strategy during a teleconference on Wednesday.

On Friday evening, Ishaq Mia filed a complaint against Khaleda to the returning officer.

In his complaint, Ishaq said BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia, who enjoys the status of a minister, held a teleconference with the senior BNP leaders, including Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, Abdullah Al Noman and Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, during a meeting with party-backed mayoral candidate Md Manzur Alam at Khulshi on Wednesday night, breaching the electoral code of conduct.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MANJUR

Ishaq also filed two other complaints to the returning officer, raising question about the eligibility of BNP-backed mayoral candidate M Manjur Alam for the elections.

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Ishaq said Manjur paid Tk 32,30,432 in fines to Bakharabad Gas Systems Limited on January 30 in 1999 on charges of pilfering of gas by his company Golden Iron Works Limited.

Manjur also paid Tk 17,23,565 in fines to Power Development Board (PDB) on October 31 in 2007 on charges of pilfering of electricity by his another company Mostafa Hakim Cement factory, the complainant added.

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KALPANA'S ABDUCTION 'Make probe report public'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hill Women's Federation (HWF) and Parbatya Chattagram Mahila Samity yesterday demanded that the government make public the inquiry report of abduction of Adivasi human rights activist Kalpana Chakma.

In a joint statement signed by Parbatya Chattagram Mahila Samity General Secretary Suprova Chakma and HWF President Jonaki Chakma also demanded arrest of the persons responsible for the abduction of Kalpana.

The deputy commissioner of Rangamati has imposed a ban on holding rally in the hill district, marking the 14 years of disappearance of Kalpana, they said. The two organisations and Naripakkha condemned the decision to ban on holding rally at Rangamati.

In June 12, 1996, several security personnel in plain-clothes from a nearby barracks entered the home of 22-year-old Kalpana Chakma, organising secretary of HWF. Since then she was missing.

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